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## The Image of Kaifeng in the Ballad Stories of the Period 1250-1450

Wilt L. Idema

As the capital of the Song dynasty Kaifeng was the wonder of the world. It was the empire's center of government and trade. With its bustling economy it had a population that may have topped a million. But once the city had been conquered and sacked by the Jürchen, little remained of the glory that was Kaifeng. The hustle and bustle of city life only survived in memory, and soon that memory became the stuff of legend. That legend had in later centuries to compete not only against the legend of Chang'an, which had served as capital of the expansive Tang empire for a much longer period, and but also against the legend of Hangzhou, which, located between the Qiantang River and the scenic Westlake, became the preferred site of romance. One of the ways, however, in which the legend of Kaifeng survived was through its association with the equally legendary character of Judge Bao. The character of Judge Bao (Bao gong 包公) originated from that of Bao Zheng 包拯 (999-1062), who briefly served as Prefect of Kaifeng during the reign of Emperor Renzong, but very soon took on a life of its own as more and more stories of crime and corruption became associated with Bao's name.

One of the richest sources for the image of Kaifeng during the Yuan and early Ming may therefore be found in the ballad stories (*cihua* 詞話) dealing with adventures of Judge Bao. Scholars had long been aware of the existence of *cihua* as a genre of prosimetric storytelling during the Yuan and early Ming, but for most of the twentieth century no texts were available. That situation changed in 1972, when a peasant from the suburbs of Shanghai sold a stash of texts to the local Zhongguo shudian 中國書店. These texts, he told the employees, had been discovered in a grave in 1967 when his production team had leveled the old lineage graveyard to make it into a pigsty. The Zhongguo shudian employees did not immediately recognize the unique value of these materials and barely paid the man enough to pay for his bus fare back home. But soon the nature of these materials was recognized: the majority of these texts consisted of *cihua* printed during the Chenghua period (1465-1487) of the Ming dynasty.<sup>1</sup> The collection was reprinted in a beautiful facsimile edition by the Shanghai Museum as early as 1973, and this edition has repeatedly been reissued since.<sup>2</sup> A critical typeset edition was later provided by Professor Zhu Yixuan 朱一玄 of Nankai University, which was published by the Zhongzhou shushe in Zhengzhou.<sup>3</sup> The discovery of these *cihua* created quite a stir, both inside and outside China. The text that may have attracted most attention probably is the one

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<sup>1</sup> The story of the discovery of these texts has been recounted a number of times, most recently by Yu Zilin 俞子林, "Ming Chenghua Yongshuntang keben shuochang cihua di faxian yu yanjiu" 明成化永順堂刻本說唱詞話的發現與研究, *Chuban ziliao* 2010 no. 1: 23-31. For a more detailed account, see Anne McLaren, *Chinese Popular Culture and Ming Chantefables*. Leiden: Brill, 1998, esp. pp. 15-31, "The Discovery of the Chantefables in Jiading County."

<sup>2</sup> *Ming Chenghua shuochang cihua congkan* 明成化說唱詞話叢刊. Shanghai: Shanghai bowuguan, 1973.

<sup>3</sup> Zhu Yixuan 朱一玄, *Ming Chenghua shuochang cihua congkan* 明成化說唱詞話叢刊. Zhengzhou: Zhongzhou guji chubanshe, 1997.

devoted to the heroic career of Hua Guan Suo 花關索, which greatly interested students of the *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*.<sup>4</sup> In comparison, the eight ballad-stories featuring Judge Bao seem to have attracted far less attention, but for our purpose they are the ones that are most relevant.<sup>5</sup>

As these texts are often referred to as *Chenghua shuochang cihua* 成化說唱詞話, some scholars take it for granted that these texts not only were printed but also composed during the Chenghua period, but that is not necessarily the case. Specialists in historical phonology have pointed out that the rhyming in the *cihua* reflects a Wu dialect pronunciation, and that it is therefore likely that they were originally composed in the Suzhou area. This argument is supported by the kind of geographical knowledge displayed in some of the texts: the anonymous authors display a detailed knowledge of the route from Shaoxing to Zhenjiang, but their knowledge of other parts of China is rather hazy. If the texts indeed originate from the Suzhou area, they first must have established their popularity in the Jiangnan area before they were reprinted in the northern capital Beijing. In the case of the texts featuring Judge Bao it would appear that some texts parody or try to outdo other texts on Judge Bao, which therefore most likely were written earlier. Zhao Jingshen 趙景深 in his article which introduced the discovery of these texts to the scholarly community stressed that the text may have been printed during the Chenghua period, but most likely were composed at an earlier date.<sup>6</sup> This argument has been developed by some later scholars. Following these specialists, I would therefore propose (until a more precise dating of individual texts is possible) to treat these ballad-stories as works dating from the period 1250-1450, which witnessed the first great flowering of vernacular literature as exemplified by the drama of the Yuan and early Ming and the vernacular tales (*huaben* 話本).<sup>7</sup>

The ballad-stories featuring Judge Bao display quite some variety in terms of content and length. One text, *The Tale of the Early Career of Rescriptor Bao* (Bao daizhi chushen zhuan 包待制出身傳), tells the story of Judge Bao's early youth, his eventual success in the examinations, and his return home in disguise. Another text of roughly equal length, *Judge Bao Selling Rice in Chenzhou* (Bao daizhi Chenzhou tiaomi ji 包待制陳州糶米記), recounts the tale of Judge Bao's mission to Chenzhou, where imperial relatives are profiting from a famine, and yet another text, *The Tale of the Humane Ancestor*

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<sup>4</sup> Inoue Taizan 井上泰山 a.o., *Ka Kan Saku den no kenkyū* 花關索傳の研究. Tokyo: Kyuko shoin, 1989; Gail Oman King, Trans. *The Story of Hua Guan Suo*. Tempe: Center for Asian Studies Arizona State University, 1989.

<sup>5</sup> These ballad-stories have recently been translated in English by Wilt L. Idema, *Judge Bao and the Rule of Law: Eight Ballad Stories from the Period 1250-1450*. Singapore: World Scientific, 2010. Earlier articles dealing with these ballad-stories were primarily interested in the relation of these ballad-stories to the Judge Bao materials of the last century of the Ming.

<sup>6</sup> Zhao Jingshen, "Tan Ming Chenghua kanben shuochang cihua" 談明成化刊說唱詞話, *Wenwu* 1972 No. 11: 19-22.

<sup>7</sup> Patrick Hanan defines the period 1250-1450 as the "early period" in his study on the original dates of composition of *huaben* in his *The Chinese Short Story: Studies in Dating, Authorship, and Composition*. Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1973. In contrast to the *cihua* texts, the vernacular tales and plays of the period 1250-1450 have mostly been preserved in late Ming editions.

*Recognizing his Mother* (Renzong renmu zhuan 仁宗認母傳), tells how Judge Bao meets with Renzong's birth mother on his way back to the capital from Chenzhou. Yet another text, all in verse and entitled *Dragon Design Bao Sentences the White Weretiger* (Bao Longtu duan baihu jing zhuan 包龍圖斷白虎精傳), recounts how a weretiger in the shape of a beautiful maiden bewitches a student, wreaks havoc in Kaifeng, and is eventually subdued by Judge Bao—with the assistance of Heavenly Master Zhang 張天師. The remaining four texts on Judge Bao are each roughly twice the length that ballad-stories we just mentioned. One text, *Rescriptor Bao Decides the Case of the Weird Black Pot* (Bao daizhi duan wai wupen zhuan 包待制段歪烏盆傳), deals with problematic case of a murder without a corpse as two evil potters have mixed the body of their victim with the clay they use to make pots. The villains in the three remaining ballad stories are an evil inn-keeper, who murders a student and robs him of the miraculous objects he had received from the daughter of robber-king who had fallen in love with him (in *The Tale of Zhang Wengui* [Zhang Wengui zhuan 張文貴傳]); a brother-in-law of the emperor who murders a student and his infant son because he has become enamored of the student's young and pretty wife (in *The Tale of the Case of Dragon-Design Bao Sentencing the Emperor's Brothers-in-law Cao* [Bao Longtu duan Cao guojiu zhuan 包龍圖斷曹國舅傳]); and even a younger brother of the emperor who murders a Luoyang household of rich weavers once he has been smitten by the beauty of the weaver's wife Liu Dusai 劉都賽 (the two *juan* of this damaged text go by separate titles). In all of these cases of murder most foul Judge Bao soon identifies the culprit and sees to it that justice is done, even though he has to resort to more and more outrageous tricks to capture the murders, and more and more gruesome forms of torture to extract a confession. With the exception of the ballad-story on the tale of the ghost in the pot, all other ballad-stories featuring Judge Bao are wholly or partly set in the Eastern Capital, and so may help us in reconstructing the Yuan and early Ming image of the city of Kaifeng.

### *A First Impression of the City*

Probably the most convenient way to suggest the grandeur of the city is to evoke the impression it makes on a first-time visitor, for instance a young and impressionable student who comes to the capital to sit for the examinations. When the future Judge Bao first arrives in the capital he spends all day taking in the sights—at the end of the day he finds himself without an inn to stay:

[Before] the fifth watch [had ended], while the sky was still dark,  
Third Son already had set out on his journey, making large steps.  
He had heard that the Eastern Capital was rich in glorious sights:  
It had twenty-four establishments offering musical entertainment.

All day long he did nothing but taking in the many fine sceneries,  
Without noticing that the red sun was slowly sinking in the west.  
When our student noticed that the sky was already getting darker,  
He realized he should as quickly as possible find a place to lodge.

The big inns did not take in those who had no companions at all,  
The smaller inns did not take in those who were traveling all alone.

Our student had at this moment no place where he could stay—  
 “Where will I be able to lay down my head and rest for the night?”<sup>8</sup>

In other ballad-stories we find more detailed descriptions of the sights that so enthralled the future Judge Bao. For instance, when the student Yuan Wenzheng 袁文正 arrives in Kaifeng with his pretty young wife and infant son, the text provides us with this catalogue of the sights they see:

When they had crossed quite some mountains and rivers,  
 When they had passed through many districts and towns,  
 When they had been on the road at least for some months,  
 They arrived outside the walls of the Eastern Capital.

They gazed at the walls more than ten *zhang* 丈 in height,  
 Then entered the triple gates that were wrapped in iron.  
 The main streets and markets went on to the south,  
 This was a flowery road that was woven of brocade.

The Eastern Market went on until the Western Market,  
 The Southern Street looked out on the Northern Street.  
 Shops selling linen faced shops selling all kinds of silk,  
 And the shops selling tea faced the shops selling wine.

The shops selling herbs faced the shops for medicines,  
 And people buying flowers called those selling flowers.  
 Husband and wife feasted their eyes on the city’s sights,  
 Without noticing that the sun was sinking in the west.<sup>9</sup>

Again the sights are so entrancing that the visitors neglect to arrange for lodging in a timely manner. Our visitors may have been impressed by the height of the city wall and the strength of the gates, but the main attractions are clearly the markets and shops, together with the tea houses and bars. When husband and wife next day want to continue their sightseeing, they ask the innkeeper Mrs. Wang for advice, who mentions the imperial palace and Kaifeng prefecture as the sights to see, and the mansion of the imperial brothers-in-law Cao as the place to avoid, but in the long description of the sights that follows (written for added emphasis in lines of ten syllables) the agencies of the central government have to compete for attention with the shops:

The student said, “Mrs. Wang, the three of us will go for a walk to see the sights, and we will be back by evening.” Mrs. Wang answered, “The first place is the surrounding of the Forbidden City, where the Son of Heaven lives; the second is Kaifeng Prefecture, and the third is the mansion of the Cao family, which is evil and dangerous in a most terrifying way, so do not say anything foolish.” The student replied, “I am a gentleman who reads the books and I am well conversant with the norms. I wouldn’t dare talk foolishly.”

<sup>8</sup> Zhu Yixuan, p. 117.

<sup>9</sup> Zhu Yixuan, pp. 190-191. While the language of the *cihua* is highly formulaic, the anonymous authors use it with discrimination. Whereas the single future Judge Bao feasts his eyes on the courtesan houses, Yuan Wenzheng and his wife concentrate on the shops.

Let's tell how the student  
     Left the gate of the inn  
         To observe in all its details,  
 To see the Eastern Capital,  
     This flowery world,  
         This cosmos made of brocade.  
 Big iron smithies  
     And small silver workshops  
         Resounded with hammering sounds;  
 At the riverside market  
     The many boats there  
         Were loaded with gold and silver.  
 In gold and silver shops,  
     In silk and linen shops,  
         People were crowding together,  
 While the courtesans,  
     Each and everyone,  
         Were the most beautiful women.  
 The Central Secretariat,  
     The Six Ministries,  
         And the offices of the Censorate—  
 Look how the emperor's  
     Grand Audience Hall  
         Rises up right into the blue clouds!  
 Those who exit and enter  
     The Eastern Floriate Gate  
         Are civil officials and prime ministers;  
 Those who come and go through  
     The Western Floriate Gate  
         Are military officers and imperial kin.  
 In the imperial capital  
     The shops for flowers and powder  
         Are too numerous for anyone to know;  
 The brokers and merchants,  
     Those engaged in buying and selling,  
         Are many thousands of myriads of men!<sup>10</sup>

When in the tale of the murderous inn-keeper the student Zhang Wengui eventually arrives in Kaifeng, we find a very similar description. But perhaps because Zhang Wengui is traveling alone, without any female companion, his eyes seem to be much

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<sup>10</sup> Zhu Yixuan, p. 191. Two major attractions of the Kaifeng, which are often mentioned in drama and fiction of the of the period 1250-1450 but which are conspicuous by their absence here are the Xiangguo si 相國寺 and the Fanlou 樊樓. One also does not find any reference to the Jinmingchi 金明池. One wonders to what extent this reflects a difference in subject matter between the genres or whether this reflects a difference in authorship and readership.

more attracted by the courtesan houses and their denizens, and it requires a play on “virtuous men” to turn his attention, briefly, to the many shops selling luxury items.

After he had been traveling on the road for some days,  
He had arrived in the neighborhood of the Phoenix City.  
From a distance he saw the royal walls rising dimly,  
A suitable wind brought the sounds of pipes and strings.

The dragon colt horse raced on like a shot arrow, so  
He promptly arrived at the gate of the emperor’s city.

The young master went into the city to have a look  
At the six commercial streets and the three markets.  
This was a flowery world that was woven of brocade,  
A mild breeze had laid out this universe of brocade.

High lofts, layer upon layer, hid inside the noble lords;  
Painted pavilions, floor upon floor, housed immortals.  
The Eastern Market went on until the Western Market,  
The Northern Street could hear the South Street songs.

And whenever he passed in front of a wine house,  
Its banner was hung so high it reached the clouds.  
“Wine made for spring, summer, fall and winter:  
Sold to travelers from east, west, south and north.”

The beauties who poured the wine were seductive;  
The pretty girls who took your money bewitching.

Their body was dressed in a long shift of red gauze,  
Their waist girdled by a gold-speckled orchid belt;  
In their hair they wore a sprig of fresh flowers, and  
Their curved shoes were embroidered with clouds.

The cups and trays were all made of gold or silver;  
The tea-cups and table china were inlaid with gold.

He passed in front of the gate of marionette theaters,  
And in the playhouses virtuous men were the subject.

Shops in uncured herbs faced shops in cured herbs;  
Crowds clamored at the shops for gold and silver.  
Jade carvers were located next to shops in pearls,  
And teahouses faced wine houses across the street.

This was the best of all the four hundred garrisons,  
Of the two thousand districts it carried the prize.  
Indeed, the wealth and splendor of the Eastern Capital  
Was nowhere else to be found but in heaven’s halls!<sup>11</sup>

While their fascination for the city’s shops and wine houses, courtesans and other items of luxury consumption may stress the gullible nature of these young men, which contributes to making them easy victims, the refusal to be attracted by the good things of life is not necessarily a positive characteristic. When the emperor’s evil younger brother

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<sup>11</sup> Zhu Yixuan, pp. 232-233.

hurries back from Luoyang to Kaifeng in the belief that he will be appointed to the plum job of capital prefect, we learn that he “had no desire the see the sights inside the city.”<sup>12</sup>

### *Inns for Travelers*

Travelers who arrive from outside need to find a place to stay. We already learned that the future Judge Bao when he first arrived in Kaifeng failed to find an inn, also because such establishments were wary to provide accommodation to single travelers. The future Judge Bao eventually is taken in by a local top-courtesan, because she is from the same hometown but has been abducted as a girl during a Lantern Festival. Other students have no trouble findings an inn. The most detailed description of an inn, its advertisements, its reception of the guest, and the decoration of its finest rooms is provided in the tale of the murderous innkeeper. Here the description of the beautiful room serves of course as a contrast to the gruesome fate that awaits the students Zhang Wengui once his miraculous objects have aroused the greed of his host:

The student had to find a place where he might stay,  
So he looked for an inn where he could settle down.  
When he arrived down the road at Bamboo Stave Lane,  
He noticed an advertisement written neatly and clearly.

On the white-washed wall was written in large signs:  
“Residential rooms available for visitors and travelers.”  
The young master then entered the inn-keeper’s place,  
And the inn-keeper immediately welcomed his guest.

He welcomed the student, and led him inside the inn;  
After some chitchat they sat down as host and guest.  
He then asked the student, “Sir, where do you live?  
What is your name and surname? Where are you from?”

The young master then told the innkeeper everything,  
“My dear sir, please listen to what I will tell you.

We live in Xizhou, in the Western Capital Region,  
And my family always has been rich and wealthy.  
My father is Millionaire Zhang, who has lots of cash,  
And I, this student Wengui, am one who reads books.

As I heard that the emperor holds an examination,  
I came to the Capital in search of fame and profit.  
Now tonight I have come to your inn to seek lodging,  
And tomorrow I will go to the examination grounds.”

When the innkeeper heard him speak in this manner,  
He promptly ordered his servants, “Listen carefully!

Hurry up and immediately get us three cups of wine,  
And prepare an evening meal to entertain the guest!”  
He also ordered them to give him the finest room,  
And to sweep and clean that room without any delay.

The young master then went upstairs to his room,  
And lifted his eyes to look around the whole place.

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<sup>12</sup> Zhu Yixuan, p. 280.



The upstairs room, he saw, offered many fairy scenes;  
Zither and go board, calligraphies and paintings too.

The cups and plates were laid out on a table of agate,  
Folding chairs of rhino-hide were placed on both sides.  
Calligraphies in all styles hung on opposing walls,  
With landscapes by Zhang Sengyou in the middle.<sup>13</sup>

The one sleeping couch was very flat and clean;  
The two layers of bed-curtains were equally new.  
The couch was covered by a coverlet of brocade,  
And the hundred flowers on the head-rest were new.

When he had finished his dinner and tea was poured,  
The servants also placed lighted candles in his room.  
Seeing this, Wengui exclaimed, "This is exceptional!  
This innkeeper knows how to treat his guests well!"<sup>14</sup>

Not all innkeepers are such scoundrels as the villain of this piece. In the tale of the murderous brother-in-law of the emperor we encounter a kind innkeeper in the character of Mrs. Wang, whose establishment has thirty six rooms and who repeatedly goes out of her way to help the widow of the murdered student Yuan Wenzheng find justice.

### *Monasteries and Temples*

In contrast to what we might expect temples and monasteries are not described a sights one goes to visit. The only monastery that is mentioned in these eight ballad-stories on Judge Bao is the Universal Light Monastery (Puzhaosi 普照寺) in Kaifeng, to which the future Judge Bao retired as an acolyte after a setback early in his career. But the author of the tale of Judge Bao's mission to Chenzhou wastes no words on a description of the monastery as such when he describes the scene in which Chancellor Wang convinces Judge Bao to rejoin the bureaucracy and take on the responsibility of restoring order in Chenzhou.<sup>15</sup> In the same way the author of the tale on the weretiger does not describe the architecture or layout of the Temple of Heavenly Blessing (Tianqingguan 天慶觀) in Kaifeng; he rather luxuriates in a detailed description of the weretiger's gory murder of the temple's abbot.<sup>16</sup> To judge from our eight ballad-stories on Judge Bao, the most prestigious temple in Kaifeng would appear to have been the one dedicated to the Great Thearch of the Eastern Marchmount (Dongyue dadi 東嶽大帝). Before Judge Bao sets out for Chenzhou he confronts Imperial Concubine Zhang 張 (the emperor's favorite) as she is on her way to the temple with the full regalia of an empress—Judge Bao goes on to accuse her with the emperor of insubordination and insists that the emperor punishes her by imposing a fine.<sup>17</sup> In one ballad-story Judge Bao visits the temple shackled as a

<sup>13</sup> Zhang Sengyou 張僧繇 is a famous painter of the sixth century.

<sup>14</sup> Zhu Yixuan, p. 233.

<sup>15</sup> Zhu Yixuan, p. 128.

<sup>16</sup> Zhu Yixuan, p. 255. This temple is still a major sight of Kaifeng. It was originally established in 1009 at the order of Emperor Zhenzong and was located inside the yamen of Kaifeng prefecture. In the story of the white weretiger, however, the temple and the yamen are clearly in two different locations.

<sup>17</sup> Zhu Yixuan, pp. 130-131.

criminal as an act of gratitude following his “recovery” from a feigned illness,<sup>18</sup> and in another text his family has borrowed a stone lion from the temple to place as a guardian outside his room during yet another feigned illness.<sup>19</sup> But in none of these cases do we get to visualize the temple itself. We do have, however, a detailed description of the temple of the Great Thearch of the Eastern Marchmount in the village of Sanglin, halfway between Chenzhou and Kaifeng, where Judge Bao will encounter the emperor’s birth mother, who is living in that village, barely surviving as an old and ugly beggar woman. Perhaps in order to create a setting suitable for that occasion the temple is described in lavish terms. One cannot escape the impression that the description may have been more fitting for a grand temple in the capital than a small temple in a village:

When His Excellency lifted his eyes to have a look, all around,  
The building indeed was exceptional, and really very new!  
The plaque above the gate was in red, carved into green lacquer,  
Ghosts and gods had been painted in colors to both of its sides.

When you entered the temple compound, once inside the gate,  
Incense smoke rose up in front of the Sagely Emperor’s pedestal.  
Thick mists rose up from below the True Lord’s throne, and  
Auspicious clouds originated from the desk of the Mighty Duke.<sup>20</sup>

Row upon row, the halls had been covered with bronze tiles,  
One after another the brackets were all decorated with gold.  
Civil officials and military officers were adorned with agate--  
All inlaid with glass, the temple had become a crystal palace.

When Judge Bao ascended the Hall of Him Equal to Heaven,<sup>21</sup>  
The Sagely and Enlightened Lord was covered by a banner.  
His Excellency lifted the screen made out of yellow gauze,  
And he fixed his eyes so as to observe the statue in all detail.

Pure gold was used to weave the patterns in his dragon robe,  
His ladies-in-waiting were adorned with kingfisher feathers.  
Observing this, His Excellency was very pleased in his heart,  
And prayed to the Sagely Lord and Ruler Equal to Heaven.<sup>22</sup>

### *Aristocrats out in the Streets*

As the seat of the central government the city of Kaifeng not only houses the imperial palace, but many other agencies of the central and local government, and the mansions of

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<sup>18</sup> Zhu Yixuan, p. 245.

<sup>19</sup> Zhu Yixuan, p. 279.

<sup>20</sup> The Sagely Emperor here is one of the titles of the Great Thearch of the Eastern Marchmount, the True Lord and the Mighty Duke are two of the gods in his elaborate divine bureaucracy.

<sup>21</sup> The full title of the Great Thearch of the Eastern Marchmount includes the epithet “Equal to Heaven.”

<sup>22</sup> Zhu Yixuan, p. 143. In *The Tale of the Early Career of Rescriptor Bao* the future Judge Bao while traveling to the capital to take the examinations spends the night in a local temple of the Great Thearch of the Eastern Marchmount and in a dream learns of his future success (Zhu Yixuan, p. 117), but no description of the temple is provided.

officials and nobility. When in the tale of the murderous brother-in-law of the emperor Judge Bao asks a local Kaifeng man to list the officials, he promptly replies:

The capital has an inner wall and an outer wall, and a hundred and eight thousand soldiers. There's the Eastern Market Street, the Western Market Street, the Great Bridge, and the Small Bridge. Then there are the emperor's relatives by birth and the emperor's relatives by marriage, the officials at court and the prime ministers. Even a little child of three years old knows all of that!"<sup>23</sup>

The troops that are stationed in and around Kaifeng hardly appear in the eight ballad-stories on Judge Bao. They are only mentioned when Judge Bao has fined the emperor for an infraction of the rules and orders that the fine will be distributed among the soldiers.<sup>24</sup> The emperor and his empress live a mostly hidden life inside the palace and are expected only to venture beyond its walls on prescribed occasions. When they traveled through the city their cortege will of course have presented quite a spectacle.<sup>25</sup> In view of the large numbers of high officials and imperial relatives, their honor guards must have been a far more common sight. The men making up these guards are described as vicious thugs, their bodies covered by tattoos. This is for instance the way the honor guard of the younger imperial brother-in-law Cao is described:

His Excellency and his cortege went off toward the south;  
On the street they met with the elder imperial brother-in-law.  
Right there they ran into the elder imperial brother-in-law,  
Who had come to the Eastern Capital to visit his mother.

One shout of his guards terrified both Heaven and Earth;  
The roaring rumble of the golden drums was quite scary.  
He was preceded by two banners burnished with gold;  
He was followed by twenty-four lances all made of gold.

One pair of men with a bow, one pair with a crossbow;  
One couple of men was facing another couple of men.  
The cudgels with golden gourds were twenty four pairs;  
The folding chair and silver basin gave a brilliant light.

The men of his guard had both tattooed arms and legs,  
And behind them came men carrying eagles and falcons.  
The flames of the red banners--a mountain-burning fire!  
On embroidered flags was written, "The emperor's kin."

Below a raised nine-layered parasol inlaid with gold,  
The emperor's relative was seated on a red-maned horse.  
Zhang Qian and Ma Wan were overcome by fear, and  
Came forward to report the situation to His Excellency.

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<sup>23</sup> Zhu Yixuan, p. 194.

<sup>24</sup> Zhu Yixuan, p. 220.

<sup>25</sup> Concubine Zhang visits the temple of the Great Thearch of the Eastern Marchmount in *Judge Bao Selling Rice in Chenzhou* with the full honor guards of the empress (Zhu Yixuan, p. 130); when in *The Tale of the Case of Dragon-Design Bao Sentencing the Emperor's Brothers-in-law Cao* the emperor visit the offices of Judge Bao in order to ask clemency for the brother of the empress (Zhu Yixuan, p. 219), the cortege is described in ten-syllable lines for additional emphasis.

His Excellency then dismounted from his sedan chair,  
And stood in front of the steps in the lower position.  
When the imperial brother-in-law noticed Judge Bao,  
He hastily dismounted from his horse to make a bow.<sup>26</sup>

The tale on the evil younger brother of the emperor provides the following description of his guards:

Our story sings that the sponsoring official Sun Wenyi  
Accompanied the new prefect, the imperial prince Zhao.  
The thirteen magical object were carried behind him,  
And so he set out on the street with his armed escort.

In front went two criers who shouted to clear the road;  
As cudgels applied the law, people moved to the sides.  
A pale yellow banner formed the head of the procession,  
With twelve lances with tips as pointed a willow leaves.

Pairs of soldiers with shields cleared the road ahead,  
And these soldiers were dressed up in a startling way.  
A silver-[ringed] rattan staff they held in their hands,  
While their body was covered by one purple garment.

The soldiers in front and behind numbered hundreds,  
While their official rode high in the saddle on horseback.  
When up front the soldiers shouted: "The prince arrives,"  
All families, rich or poor, tightly closed their doors.

The great prince on his horse cursed them as follows,  
Loudly cursing the people of the streets and markets:  
"In the past you relied for protection on Judge Bao,  
But on whom will you rely for protection at present?"

My troops have been away from home for a while,  
They are short on traveling money, cash for the road.  
If people do not come up with their satin and brocade,  
I will steal it from them to award to my many troops!"<sup>27</sup>

In view of these descriptions it should cause no surprise that one of the major challenges for Judge Bao in bringing these high officials and imperial relatives to justice is how to separate these villains from their guards.

### *Conclusion*

The ballad-stories on Judge Bao evoke in their pages the splendor and prosperity, the grandeur and the crowds of Kaifeng as the capital of the Song dynasty during its heyday. We have to wonder, of course, to what extent these descriptions indeed reflect the conditions of the middle of the eleventh century, and to what extent they reflect the urban

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<sup>26</sup> Zhu Yixuan, p. 199.

<sup>27</sup> Zhu Yixuan, pp. 281.

culture of the time of their composition, one or more centuries later. Some elements of these descriptions are so general that they do not allow for any precise dating, but others suggest the influence of Hangzhou and Dadu. In this respect especially the major role of the temple of the Great Thearch of the Eastern Marchmount draws our attention, as this deity would appear to have enjoyed his greatest popularity in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. One also has to take into account that the descriptions that are included in these ballad-stories may be based on set-pieces--but these have been clearly chosen and adapted in function of the plot of the stories and the characterization of victims and villains.

In this connection I would like to draw special attention to the last few lines from our last quote, in which the evil younger brother of the emperor expresses his hatred for Judge Bao and his disdain for “the people of the streets and markets.” This latter term refers, I assume, to the class of prosperous city merchants and shopkeepers. In Yuan drama and early vernacular fiction it is rare to find such direct expressions of class-antagonism. These lines are of course not necessarily an expression of the true thoughts of the aristocracy, but rather reflect the expectations and fears of the prosperous townspeople concerning their social betters and their outrageous rapacity. While the antagonism revealed in these lines is not explicitly directed against the members of the bureaucracy who achieved their status through the examination system, these texts repeatedly stress that Judge Bao is very much an outsider in those high circles—if his face is “black” it is because he is sun-burnt. And this is the way in which he is cursed by Lady Cao, the emperor’s mother-in-law:

Her Ladyship thereupon ranted in a language most foul,  
 She immediately started to curse Judge Bao, “You beast!  
 Down in the countryside your father is a village chief,  
 And your mother weaves linen and picks mulberry leaves.  
 Your elder brother operates a pawn shop in the village,  
 Your second brother sells booze in the village to the west.  
 When you grew up you were the third son, Imbecile Bao,  
 You recited the *Classic of Filial Piety* while herding cows.  
 On behalf of others you held the inkstone and rubbed ink;  
 You filled the inkstone with water in the service of others.  
 When you heard that the Humane Ancestor held an exam,  
 You jumped across the Dragon Gate with brush and paper.  
 Now you may out of the blue have obtained some office,  
 But you are less than the dust below the soles of my shoes!”<sup>28</sup>

For all its outward splendor Kaifeng in these ballad-stories also turns out to be a city of crime and corruption, in which the titled aristocracy rides roughshod over the population and in which even the emperor himself without the stern support of Judge Bao turns out to be unable to rein in his relatives and favorites who all blatantly abuse their position. But in order to be an effective protector, Judge Bao needs not only the protection provided by his official guarantors, but also--perhaps even more importantly—a different

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<sup>28</sup> Zhu Yixuan, p. 199.

perspective, a perspective that is based on his experiences outside those charmed circles of aristocracy and bureaucracy.

## 詞話開封

Wilt L. Idema

本文旨在研究以記錄包龍圖公案故事的明成化刊本說唱詞話中對於北宋都城開封城市風貌的書寫。第一部分討論詞話中對於城內鱗次櫛比的酒樓以及商舖的最初印象描寫；其次討論對於都城內客棧和寺廟的記述，尤其是祀奉泰山東嶽大帝的東嶽廟。最後討論遍布街巷的兇殘高官護衛，每一部分將結合大量詞話引文做論證。

關鍵詞：開封，說唱詞話，包公，東岳大帝，護衛

## The Image of Kaifeng in the Ballad Stories of the Period 1250-1450

Wilt L. Idema

This paper researches the images of Kaifeng as the capital of the Northern Song as found in the ballad-stories (*cihua*) from the period 1250-1450 and dealing with the court-cases of the legendary Judge Bao. The paper notes the prevalence of shops and wine houses in the descriptions of first impressions, and next discusses the descriptions of inns and of temples, especially the temple dedicated to the Great Thearch of the Eastern Marchmount (Dongyuedadi). The final section of the paper discusses the prominent presence of the fierce bodyguards of high officials on the streets of the city. Each section is illustrated by extensive quotations from the texts discussed.

**Keywords:** Kaifeng    ballad-stories    judge Bao    Great Thearch of the Eastern  
Marchmount            bodyguards